

Slavery

By The South

The Distinctive South

One of the most sectionalized parts of the country...

Similarities

- About the same size as the north
- Wanted some rights to be left to the states like the north
- In favor of the westward expansion
- Governed by the same constitution
- Same language, currency, and god
- Shared the economic booms and depressions
- Large gap between the rich and the poor



Differences

- Longer growing season, warmer climate
- Large rivers providing transportation and rich soil
- Society based around slavery
- Population density low
- Less factories, shop centers, and railroads
- Very small banking and shipping system
- No cities
- Slower urban growth

Pro-slavery worldwide view

- Southerners defended slavery as a “positive good” and “necessary evil”
- Like the rest of the world, slavery was a way of life
- Blacks had always done labor
- Slaves were legal property
- Slaveholders thought of themselves as leading their slaves to success



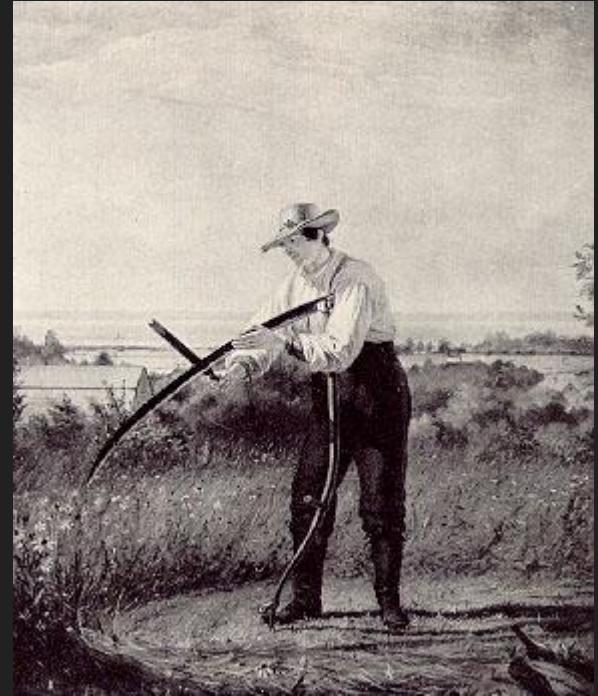
A slave Society

- Slavery shaped the social structure of the south
- The entire base of the economy
- Southerners were very traditional
- Responded harshly to any threats to slavery
- This bitterness would lead to the civil war

Social Structure of the South

Yeomen Farmers

- Individualistic and hard working farmers
- Operated both apart from and within the slave-based staple-crop economy
- The yeomen were farmers who moved down the southern Appalachians or into Kentucky and Tennessee after the War of 1812
- Men cleared fields, built log cabins, and established farms while the women labored in the household economy.



Free Blacks

- The condition for them was better than that of slaves, but was generally worse than the yeoman's
- They were usually the descendants of men and women set free by their owners in the 1780s and 1790s
- White southerners were desperate to restrict the growing free black presence and restricted them to harsh laws such as not being able to own a gun or buy liquor
- Most worked in rural areas and struggled to survive
- Despite these obstacles, some free blacks prospered and owned land



While still constrained by white laws, urban freedom allowed African Americans a better life. Among the freedoms were the ability to educate their children and practice a freer religion.

The Planters

Culture

- Plantation society was rigidly gendered. Young women relished the opportunity to leave their homes and attend parties, visits, and gatherings.
- Planters and farmers both were motivated by independence and codes of honor.
- Aristocratic planters valued wealth and a more complex society, while the lower class exalted simplicity and did not like the class above theirs love for wealth.

Families

- Young women often approached marriage with anxiety. They saw it as a date that fixed their fate. Women observed marriage as the wife being subservient to the husband.
- The average southern white woman could expect to bear eight children. Complications in childhood were a major cause of death.
- Southern men did not tolerate discussion of slavery by women and published articles saying that women should restrict their interests to the home.

Plantation economy

- Slaves were the main determinant of wealth in the South. Slaves were bought and sold, people even took out mortgages on the slaves they purchased so that they could possess more faster. One slave boy even referred to as a “human cash machine and investment vehicle”.
- The widespread availability of slave workers devalued free labor.
- The political power of the planters relied on their assumption of a continuous monopoly of world cotton and infinite slave labor.

The Slaves

Slave Conditions

- Slaves were fed a monotonous and non-nutritious diet.
- They had little beyond the coarse clothing they wore.
- A lack of shoes became a sort of identifier of slaves.
- Most lived in crude shacks, except for those on the very richest plantations.
- Work days began before dawn, and finished after dusk, requiring much more energy than slaves' diets provided.



Culture (Religion)

Slaves began adopting the ways of Christianity, but they fashioned it into an instrument of support and resistance. It was a religion in justice and deliverance, unlike their masters, which was directed at them as a means of control.

Slaves believed that Jesus cared about their souls. For the Slaves, Christianity was a religion of personal and group salvation. Men and women worshipped every day.

Culture (Religion)

Some of the slaves held secret prayer meetings that lasted most of the night. They believed that God would enter life and end their bondage.

This faith and the joy and emotional release they got by worshipping, sustained them.

In West Africa, they believed that a person's personality would be replaced by God himself.

People believed they would become possessed by God causing them to shout, sing, and dance.

Culture (Music)

Rhythm and physical movement were crucial to slaves religious experience. The slaves songs were referred to as “Sorrow songs”.

The tension and sudden change between sorrow and joy animates many songs

“Sometimes I feel like a motherless child... Sometimes I feel like an eagle in the air... Spread my wings and fly, fly, fly,”

Many songs expressed a closeness and intimacy with God.

Some songs would express rebellion.

“He said, and if I had my way, if I had my way, if I had my way I’d tear this building down!”

Economics of Slavery

Slave traders bought and sold slaves for profit. While it profited traders, it damaged the economy. It held back city growth and technological advancement. So much farming tired the soil, and crop yields slowly decreased.



Resistance

Slave Rebellions

- A slave rebellion was an armed revolt by the slaves on a plantation to try and overthrow the landowner.
- A rebellion was one of the largest concerns for slave owners especially for people who had large slave populations.
- The rebellions were most frequently held in the Caribbean or Central America.
- Many rebellions were only for better living conditions are higher wages not all slaves were as ambitious and in search of their freedom.



Denmark Vesey

Denmark Vesey was a skilled carpenter and leader among the slaves in Charleston, South Carolina.

Convicted ringleader of “The Rising”, a major potential slave revolt planned for the city in June 1822.

Nat Turner

- Male slave who rebelled in Southampton County, Virginia in 1831
- He learned to read at a young age and became a preacher
- In August 22, 1831, he led a group of rebelled slaves from farm to farm attacking and killing whites
- In total they killed sixty whites of both genders and all ages
- White retaliation included over two hundred slaves killed
- A bestselling book was wrote about an interview before his execution